

## **Karnataka Government to Abolish Orderlies System in the Police**

Bengaluru: In a welcome move, the Karnataka government has decided to abolish the system of orderlies in police, a practice dating back to the colonial era.

Orderlies are police constables who are initially trained in crime detection, handling law and order situations and traffic management but end up doing menial jobs in homes of police officers. At present, there are around 2,500 orderlies in the state, men who do petty jobs like washing clothes, cutting vegetables, cleaning dishes and gardening.

"We have decided to do away with the orderly system and recruit Group D staff as an alternative to constables who might be called 'followers' or 'dalayats'," home minister G Parameshwara said after a meeting with senior police officers in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Over the years, efforts by several governments to abolish the British Raj system faced stiff resistance, especially from senior IPS officers. Abolition of the orderly system was one of the long-pending demands of the constabulary. The issue gained steam after constables threatened to go on mass leave on June 4. The department had to invoke the Essential Services Maintenance Act (Esma) to dissuade them from going on leave.

Parameshwara, however, refused to set any deadline for abolition of the system, which he said will be done in a phased manner. "In principle, we have decided to withdraw the orderly system but the transition will take time. We plan to put an end to the system beginning from Bengaluru," he added.

This apart, the home minister said the government has set up a five-member committee to look into the demand of policemen for a pay hike and submit a report within a month. The home department will also recommend to the pay commission to increase salaries of constables. "At present, the basic pay of a constable is on par with a second division assistant though their nature of work cannot be compared," Parameshwara said.

The minister said the department is also considering introducing 'risk allowance' for all police personnel and write to the Election Commission to pay poll allowance to police constables on par with other officials. "Constables are being paid 50% less allowance than other officials," he said.